

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CIEP-02 SPC-03 STR-08

TRSE-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03 AGR-20

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4537

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 11509

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, EEC, UK

SUBJECT: THE BRITISH INTEREST IN AN EC REGIONAL POLICY

REF: A) LONDON A-1218; B) EC BRUSSELS 2663;  
C) EC BRUSSELS A-310

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN PUSHING FOR THE PROMPT ESTABLISHMENT  
OF AN EC REGIONAL POLICY, THE UK RECOGNIZES THAT, FOR  
THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, ITS NET RECEIPTS FROM ANY EC  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND WILL COVER ONLY A SMALL PART  
OF ITS SIZEABLE NET CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY'S  
BUDGET. BRITISH OFFICIALS NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE THAT  
THE EXISTENCE OF A COMMON REGIONAL POLICY, WITH SOME NET  
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RETURN, HOWEVER SMALL, TO THE UK, WOULD BE A USEFUL WAY

TO DEMONSTRATE TO A SCEPTICAL BRITISH PUBLIC THAT THERE ARE TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO BE GAINED FROM EC MEMBERSHIP. SOME BRITISH OFFICIALS ALSO CONSIDER THAT A COMMON REGIONAL POLICY IS A PREREQUISITE FOR EC ECONOMIC UNION. THE UK WON ONE VICTORY ON REGIONAL POLICY LAST JUNE, WHEN THE COMMISSION AGREED NOT TO APPLY THE COMMUNITY'S CEILING ON REGIONAL AIDS TO THE UK'S OWN DEVELOPMENT AREAS. THE MAIN BATTLE NOW LIES AHEAD, AS THE COMMUNITY MOVES TO ESTABLISH AN EC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PARIS SUMMIT DEADLINE. THE BRITISH RECOGNIZE THAT THE BARGAINING WILL BE HARD AND THEY EXPECT THAT REGIONAL POLICY MAY BECOME LINKED IN A TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY PACKAGE WITH OTHER ISSUES, SUCH AS THE MOVE TO THE SECOND STAGE OF ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION OR THE REVIEW OF THE CAP. AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE, AN EC REGIONAL POLICY IS NOT LIKELY TO AFFECT US INTERESTS DIRECTLY. OUR INTERESTS MAY BE AFFECTED INDIRECTLY, HOWEVER, DURING THE INTRA-COMMUNITY BARGAINING ON THE ESTABLISHMENTS OF SUCH A POLICY. THE UK WILL ATTACH TOP PRIORITY TO OBTAINING CONCESSIONS FROM THE FRENCH AND OTHER MEMBER STATES ON THIS ISSUE. THIS WILL LEAVE THE BRITISH WITH FEWER BARGAINING COUNTERS FOR OTHER ISSUES OF MORE DIRECT INTEREST TO US, SUCH AS THE MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ONE OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S HIGHEST PRIORITIES WITH REGARD TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMON REGIONAL POLICY. BRITISH OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT A JOINT EFFORT BY THE COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP ITS BACKWARD REGIONS WILL SERVE BRITAIN'S OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS, AND WILL ALSO ADVANCE THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION.

2. ONE OF THE MAIN DRAWBACKS FOR THE UK OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY IS THE LARGE NET CONTRIBUTION THAT IT HAS TO MAKE TO THE EC BUDGET. THIS CONTRIBUTION WILL INCREASE GRADUALLY DURING THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP. BY 1977, THE LAST YEAR OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ESTIMATED THAT THE UK'S GROSS CONTRIBUTION WILL BE \$812 MILLION. MOST OF THIS WILL GO

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TO THE COMMUNITY'S AGRICULTURAL FUND. RECEIPTS ARE ESTIMATED AT \$225 MILLION. THIS WILL LEAVE A TOTAL NET CONTRIBUTION IN 1977 OF \$587 MILLION. THIS CONTRIBUTION IS A BALANCE OF PAYMENTS OUTFLOW. IT IS ALSO A DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEM, SINCE THE BRITISH PUBLIC RESENTS PAYING FOR AN EC AGRICULTURAL POLICY THAT MAINLY BENEFITS OTHER MEMBER STATES. THE GOVERNMENT'S ESTIMATES, MOREOVER, MAY WELL BE OVER-OPTIMISTIC, AND THE NET

CONTRIBUTION MAY BE EVEN HIGHER.

3. BRITISH OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE THAT FOR THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE, THE UK'S NET RECEIPTS FROM ANY EC REGIONAL FUND WILL COVER ONLY A SMALL PART OF ITS NET CONTRIBUTION. AT THE VERY BEST, BY 1977, RECEIPTS COULD TOTAL AROUND \$100 MILLION PER YEAR. THEY NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE THAT EVEN A SMALL RETURN WOULD HAVE BENEFICIAL POLITICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS WITHIN THE UK. IT WOULD SHOW THAT MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY CAN BRING TANGIBLE BENEFITS

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TO THE BRITISH PEOPLE. IT WOULD ALSO SHOW THAT THE COMMUNITY IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PROBLEMS OF POVERTY

AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

4. IN ADDITION TO SERVING THE UK'S OWN INTERESTS, BRITISH OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT A COMMON REGIONAL POLICY WOULD STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY. THEY NOTE THAT THE PREAMBLE TO THE ROME TREATY CALLED ON THE MEMBER STATES TO ENSURE HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT BY REDUCING THEIR REGIONAL DIFFERENCES. YET TODAY, FIFTEEN YEARS LATER, THE COMMUNITY STILL HAS NO COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY. CERTAIN EC EXPENDITURES HAVE HAD IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPEMT, INCLUDING LOANS BY THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK, ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE  
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UNDER THE ECSC TREATY, AND GRANTS FROM THE SOCIAL FUND AND THE GUIDANCE SECTION OF FEOGA. THESE HAVE BEEN MADE ON A PIECEMEAL BASIS, HOWEVER, WITHOUT ANY OVERALL PLAN. THE COMMISSION SUBMITTED GENERAL PROPOSALS IN 1969 AND 1971, BUT THE COUNCIL AGREED ONLY ON A FEW PRINCIPLES DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT NATIONAL REGIONAL POLICIES DID NOT DISTORT COMPETITIVE CONDITIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

5. BRITISH OFFICIALS ARE BY NO MEANS UNHAPPY THAT THE COMMUNITY OF SIX FAILED TO INTRODUCE A REGIONAL POLICY BEFORE BRITAIN BECAME A MEMBER. PROGRAMS DESIGNED FOR RURAL FRANCE OR THE MEZZOGIORNO WOULD NOT HAVE SUITED THE DECLINING INDUSTRIAL AREAS OF SCOTLAND OR THE NORTH OF ENGLAND. NOW THAT THE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN ENLARGED, HOWEVER, THE BRITISH BELIEVE THAT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD MOVE FORWARD PROMPTLY IN THIS AREA. THEY POINT OUT THAT REGIONAL PROBLEMS MAY IN FACT BE AGGRAVATED BY ENLARGEMENT, SINCE THERE WILL BE A GREATER TENDENCY FOR INDUSTRY INDUSTRY TO CONCENTRATE IN THE "GOLDEN TRIANGLE" BETWEEN BIRMINGHAM, DUSSELDORF AND MILAN.

6. THE UK HAS HAD A REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY OF ITS OWN SINCE BEFORE WORLD WAR II, LONGER THAN ANY OTHER MEMBER STATE (SEE REF A). IT NOW SPENDS MORE THAN \$750 MILLION A YEAR ON PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN BACKWARD AREAS. THIS IS TWICE AS MUCH AS THE AMOUNT THAT ITALY SPENDS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND TEN TIMES AS MUCH AS FRANCE. THE BRITISH CONSIDER IT ONLY NATURAL FOR THE COMMUNITY TO ASSUME REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS AS THE ECONOMIES OF THE MEMBER STATES BECOME MORE INTEGRATED. THEY ALSO POINT OUT THAT AS THE COMMUNITY MOVES TOWARD MONETARY UNION, SOME OF THE CLASSIC METHODS OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF UNEVEN GROWTH (FOR EXAMPLE, PARITY CHANGES) WILL NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE. SUBSTITUTES MUST BE FOUND, AND REGIONAL POLICY WILL BE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL ONES.

7. THE UK HAS ALREADY WON ONE VICTORY IN THE INTRA-COMMUNITY BARGAINING ON REGIONAL POLICY. IN OCTOBER OF 1971, THE SIX ADOPTED A RESOLUTION WHICH DIVIDED THE COMMUNITY INTO "CENTRAL" AND "PERIPHERAL" REGIONS. IN  
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THE CENTRAL REGIONS, WHICH WERE DESCRIBED AS THE "MORE INDUSTRIALIZED" PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY, THE MEMBER STATES AGREED THAT NATIONAL REGIONAL AIDS COULD COMPRISE NO MORE THAN 20 PERCENT OF ANY GIVEN INVESTMENT. NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON CRITERIA FOR INVESTMENT IN THE PERIPHERAL AREAS, WHICH WERE DEFINED AS THE BORDER AREAS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST GERMANY, THE PARTS OF FRANCE THAT ALREADY BENEFIT FROM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, AND THE MEZZOGIORNO.

8. LAST JUNE, AFTER ENERGETIC LOBBYING FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, THE COMMISSION AGREED THAT NONE OF THE UK'S DEVELOPMENT AREAS - THE REGIONS WHICH RECEIVE THE LARGEST SHARE OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S REGIONAL ASSISTANCE - SHOULD BE CONSIDERED "CENTRAL", EVEN THOUGH THEY COVER 55 PERCENT OF THE LAND SURFACE OF THE UK AND INCLUDE SOME HEAVILY INDUSTRIALIZED REGIONS. THE COMMUNITY'S 20 PERCENT CEILING ON REGIONAL AID WILL THEREFORE NOT APPLY TO THE UK'S DEVELOPMENT AREAS. THE LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE THAT IS GIVEN TO REGIONS OUTSIDE THE DEVELOPMENT AREAS FALLS WELL WITHIN THE CEILING. THE COMMISSION ALSO AGREED TO MAKE A MORE COMPLETE AND DETAILED CLASSIFICATION OF REGIONS IN THE COURSE OF A GENERAL REVIEW TO BE CONDUCTED BEFORE THE END OF 1974. JOHN DAVIES, THE BRITISH MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR EC MATTERS, CALLED THE COMMISSION'S DECISION "WHOLLY SATISFACTORY."

9. THE MAIN BATTLE ON REGIONAL POLICY NOW LIES AHEAD.

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AT THE PARIS SUMMIT IN OCTOBER OF 1972, THE NINE AGREED TO CREATE A REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND BY THE END OF 1973. AFTER SUBMITTING A GENERAL REPORT ON REGIONAL POLICY IN MAY OF THIS YEAR (REF B), THE COMMISSION AGREED ON SPECIFIC PROPOSALS IN LATE JULY ON THE SIZE OF THE FUND AND ON HOW IT SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED (REF C). THE COMMISSION HAS PROPOSED THAT THE FUND SHOULD BE FINANCED BY THE COMMUNITY'S "OWN RESOURCES" (LEVIES, CUSTOMS DUTIES, AND A PORTION OF VAT RECEIPTS). ANNUAL DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE FUND SHOULD INCREASE FROM 500 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT IN 1974 TO 1 BILLION IN 1976. THE COMMUNITY WOULD NOT - AT LEAST INITIALLY - ADMINISTER ITS OWN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, BUT WOULD TURN THE MONEY OVER TO MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WHICH WOULD USE IT TO

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COMPLEMENT THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. ACCORDING TO THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL, THE FUND WOULD NOT BE DISTRIBUTED ON THE BASIS OF NATIONAL QUOTAS. THE COMMUNITY WOULD DECIDE ON A LIST OF REGIONS THAT QUALIFY FOR ASSISTANCE, AND DISTRIBUTE FUNDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGREED CRITERIA. ONLY AREAS THAT ARE ALREADY

BENEFITTING FROM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS WOULD QUALIFY FOR EC ASSISTANCE.

10. BRITISH OFFICIALS ARE GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS. (GEORGE THOMSON, THE EC COMMISSIONER RESPONSIBLE FOR REGIONAL POLICY, IS NOT ONLY BRITISH. HIS POLITICAL BASE IS IN SCOTLAND, WHICH RECEIVES A LARGE SHARE OF BRITAIN'S REGIONAL AID). THE BRITISH WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A LARGER FIGURE FOR THE FUND, ALTHOUGH THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN UNREALISTIC. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT SOME SORT OF OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL NATIONAL QUOTAS ARE LIKELY TO BE ESTABLISHED.

11. BRITISH OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT THE UK STANDS A GOOD CHANCE OF GETTING MORE FROM THE FUND THAN IT CONTRIBUTES TO IT. THEY ARGUE THAT BECAUSE THE UK HAS MORE SERIOUS REGIONAL PROBLEMS THAN MOST OF THE OTHER MEMBER STATES, IT DESERVES A PROPORTIONAL SHARE OF THE RECEIPTS. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT IT IS ONLY FAIR TO BALANCE THE UK'S SUBSTANTIAL PAYMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY'S AGRICULTURAL FUND WITH RECEIPTS FROM THE REGIONAL FUND, ALTHOUGH THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS NOT AN ARGUMENT THAT CAN BE USED IN BRUSSELS. THE BRITISH EXPECT THAT THE BARGAINING WILL BE TOUGH. FRENCH OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT THE EC REGIONAL FUND SHOULD BE SMALL, AND THAT THE ONLY MEMBER STATES WITH SERIOUS REGIONAL PROBLEMS ARE FRANCE AND ITALY. GERMANY, THE MOST LIKELY NET CONTRIBUTOR TO THE REGIONAL FUND, HAS SHOWN A STRONG RELUCTANCE TO INCREASE ITS CURRENT OUTLAYS TO THE COMMUNITY. BRITISH OFFICIALS EXPECT THAT THE EC COUNCIL WILL BEGIN DISCUSSING THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS AT ITS MEETING ON OCTOBER 15-16. THE FINAL DECISIONS WILL BE MADE IN LATE DECEMBER - AND MAY BE TIED IN A TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY PACKAGE WITH OTHER ISSUES SUCH AS CONFIDENTIAL

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THE MOVE TO THE SECOND STATE OF ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION, OR THE REVIEW OF CAP.

12. AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EC REGIONAL POLICY IS NOT LIKELY TO AFFECT US INTERESTS DIRECTLY, EITHER POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY. THERE IS NO SIGN THAT THE COMMUNITY INTENDS TO USE ITS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND AS A WAY TO ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT, OR TO PROMOTE IMPORT SUBSTITUTION. THE UK, AT LEAST, HAS NOT USED ITS REGIONAL PROGRAMS IN THIS WAY, AND US FIRMS HAVE HAD ACCESS TO UK REGIONAL AIDS ON THE SAME BASIS AS DOMESTIC BRITISH FIRMS, IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT SINCE THE UK

ATTACHES TOP PRIORITY TO AN EC REGIONAL POLICY, IT CAN  
BE EXPECTED TO PRESS HARDER FOR FRENCH CONCESSIONS ON  
THIS ISSUE THAN IT WILL ON OTHERS THAT MAY BE OF MORE  
DIRECT INTEREST TO THE US (FOR EXAMPLE, THE MULTILATERAL  
TRADE NEGOTIATIONS).

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## Message Attributes

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